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### The Quality Look in Home Furnishings

Donna M. Spooner

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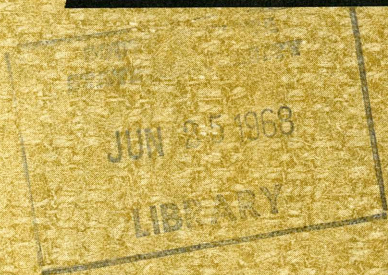
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# the Quality Look in Home Furnishings

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COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE  
SOUTH DAKOTA STATE UNIVERSITY  
U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE



# the Quality Look in Home Furnishings

by DONNA M. SPOONER, extension home furnishings specialist

Good appearance and durability, for the most part, depend on accuracy of workmanship, appropriateness, and quality of materials used.

First, consider the intended use of an article, then its quality in relation to use and care, and finally, its intrinsic beauty and simplicity. No amount of applied design or trim will improve an article which functions poorly or is poorly constructed.

There are different ways to solve construction problems and a variety of fabrics and materials from which to select. There are no hard and fast rules on the best method or best material. There are many ways to do things and many choices of materials. Consider the "why" when you make your choice. Will that choice give the article the result you desire? Note that all points may not apply to all articles.

## APPEARANCE AND DURABILITY

- Clean, neat, well pressed for exhibiting
- Attractive, good lines, soft folds and good draping
- Good workmanship
- Flat, not puckered or stretched
- Practical and durable
- Fabrics on straight of grain line preferred
- Designs matched, grain line straight
- Firm and stable fabric suitable for purpose intended (cleanable, light resistant, manageable, etc.)
- Fabric which maintains its original shape and color in use and cleaning
- Color and texture combination of fabric and trim pleasing

## CONSTRUCTION

### A. General

- Machine or hand stitching suitable for fabric and article
- Bastings and markings removed
- Neat and straight machine stitching
- About 12 stitches per inch
- Tension adjusted for fabric
- Thread matched to fabric (color and size)
- Correct size of needle for thread and fabric
- Thread ends secured and clipped
- Single thread for hand stitching
- Direction of grain line (lengthwise) placed correctly
- Design (motifs and color) centered, matched and balanced for appearance.

- When design is off-grain (which may be, in the case of laminated, bonded, permanent press and under coated fabrics, etc.) you must decide what is most important—prominent grain line or matching pattern and colors.  
(Examples: stripes, plaids or prominent patterns would definitely need matching)
- Plastic—Pieces placed together, folded down width of seam allowance, and stitched once on fold:
  - Raw edges show on right side
  - Longer stitch length to avoid tearing
  - Durable thickness

### B. Seams

- Flat, not puckered or stretched
- Well pressed
- Selvages removed or clipped except on articles of humble use (such as towels, pillow cases, sheets, etc.)
- Suitable for fabric and durability (seams such as flat felled, French, bound, corded preferred)
- Correctly stitched
- Properly finished if needed
- Curved seams clipped at intervals
- Adequate seam allowance from  $\frac{1}{4}$  to  $\frac{3}{8}$  inches wide (may vary according to article)
- Accurate width
- Seams graded when necessary or trimmed to remove bulkiness

### C. Corners and Casings

- Points and inside corners, if squared, clipped up to stitching
- Two rows of machine stitching about  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch apart when extra strength is needed.  
(Examples: pillow cases, protectors, bottom of laundry bags, etc.)
- Bulkiness trimmed away for neat turning

### D. Facings

- On bias if curved edge
- Flat along edges
- Understitched close to seam line
- Stay stitched if loosely woven or stretchy fabric

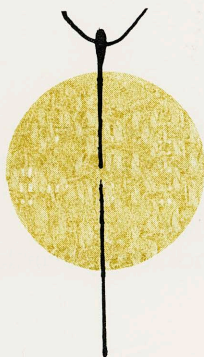


## E. Fastenings and Closures

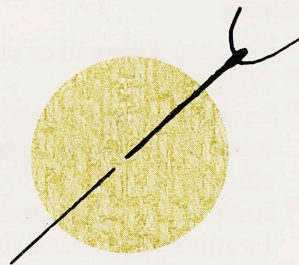
- Inconspicuous as possible
- Hooks, eyes, bars, tacks, loops, etc. correctly applied
- Zippers: (lapped or slot seam) well covered by lap
- Machine stitching even width from edge of lap may taper slightly to accommodate tab
- Envelope closure ample lap to avoid gapping

## F. Hems (bottom and sides)

- Width in good proportion to article and suitable for weight of fabric
- Machine or hand stitching suitable for fabric and article
- Turned under edge about  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch
- Invisible hand stitches on right side
- No long threads on underside to snag or wear out
- Hand stitches loose (not pulled tight)
- Straight machine stitching close to turned under edge
- Slip stitches straight with grain, passing through one or two threads (not diagonally across weave



THIS



NOT THIS

of fabric) and concealed in the hem fold. About 10 stitches per inch

## G. Other Features

### 1. Gathers, shirring, tucks, ruffles, etc.

- Even spacing
- Ample fullness according to fabric weight, design of article, and place where used
- Good fit

### 2. Buttonholes and Buttons

- On grain line
- In good proportion to size of article
- Good placement and spacing
- Firm, not frayed
- Square corners for bound buttonholes with piping and even width
- Covered buttons free of wrinkles
- Buttons well attached, shank if needed

### 3. Pleats

- Odd number preferred
- Correctly spaced
- Firm sharp pleats with interfacing suitable for fabric
- 3 to 4 inches heading for French pleats
- Each small French pleat  $\frac{1}{2}$  to  $\frac{3}{4}$  inch deep
- Neat stitching by machine
- Thread matched to fabric
- Folds of each pleat tacked together by hand at top end of stitching and at bottom edge of folds

### 4. Lining—Suitable for fabric and for appearance, durability and protection

### 5. Other—Weighted if necessary (casement, draperies, etc.)